



ARE WE DESTROYING WOMAN'S BEAUTY?

The Startling Warning of a Great English Physician Against Higher Education of Woman.

The British Medical and Educational World have been startled by the results of the studies and experiments of one of the most eminent physicians of England who declares that the present system of higher education of woman must inevitably ruin woman's beauty and result in the physical degeneration of the human race.

Sir James Crichton Browne, one of the most famous of English physicians, has made a fierce protest against the higher education of women. He urges many reasons against it, but the one with which he chiefly seeks to arrest public opinion before it is too late is that this education will destroy the physical beauty of woman.

His reasoning is so earnest, so serious and so scientific that it must force us to consider whether we are not doing wrong in permitting women to enter into a severe and continuous course of study. Every educational institution for women is concerned in this matter, for the public schools of New York to the best of women's colleges, in both cases girls and women are forced to enter into educational competition with boys and men.

The women students are practically forced to enter into competition with the men. The process by which a man's education is imparted to a woman reduces her to ugliness he declares to be a very simple and natural one. It consists chiefly in the disorganization of her nervous system. The results are loss of graceful outlines, loss of appetite, lines in the face, bad teeth, bad complexion, short sight and possibly hysteria, epilepsy and insanity.

The smaller size of the female brain is a fundamental sexual distinction. It is not to be accounted for by the hypothesis that environment, educational advantages and habits of life, acting through a long series of generations, have stimulated the growth of the cerebrum in one sex more than in the other. This is made clear by the fact that the same differences in brain weight between men and women have been found in savage races. There are also grounds for believing that there is a difference in the balance of parts in the male and female brains respectively.

HER MORE SYMMETRICAL BRAIN. Another difference between the brains of men and women is one of convoluted arrangement. The brains of women like their bodies, are more symmetrical than those of men. In the male the right hemisphere usually exceeds the left in weight by 3.7 grammes, and in females only by 2.1 grammes.

Still another difference is that the female brain in proportion receives a larger supply of blood than the male, although the blood is of poorer quality. The region of the brain which in men is most richly flushed with blood is that which is concerned (we have reason to believe) in volition, cognition and idea-motor processes; while the region which in women is best supplied is that concerned in sensory functions. This has a most important bearing on the intellectual and emotional differences of the sexes, showing how natural it is for women to be bright, quick and intuitive.

All through life the male brain differs from the female in capacities, aptitudes and powers. Differences early assert themselves. Thackeray has said that little girls make love in the nursery and practice the arts of coquetry of the page boy for brings the coal upstairs, and as for the page boy it is certain that his pugnacious propensities are already fully developed and have brought him into conflict with his brother buttons.

And differences subsist to the last. The aged spinster left in "maiden meditation fancy free" lavishes her altruistic emotions on cat, poodle, or parrot; and the hoary veteran, fidgety and frangible, concentrates his egotistic attention on his own liver.

These differences in brain structure and function, which at every stage of existence separate the sexes, have a special pathological significance at the period when sexual divergence is taking place most rapidly and when, also, education is being pushed forward with most vigor. Education from first to last can only be safely conducted in the light of cerebral physiology, but, unfortunately, those who have charge of education too often dispense with that light, or regard it as misleading.

From a purely educational point of view the work done by high schools for girls is not all pure gain. They have conducted girls from the unkempt meadows of natural growth into the trim gardens of artificial culture. Before the high schools era dawned girls lived and learned and reasoned in a way, and in introducing them to the higher condition these schools have withdrawn them to a large extent from homely household occupations, which were not without educational value, and have substituted the dogmatic teaching of the herring for the precept and example of the mother. So much is this the case and so impossible is it for growing girls, exhausted by five or six hours of school work and private study to make themselves acquainted with domestic economy, that it seems to Sir James essential that high schools, if they are faithfully to prepare their pupils to become efficient wives and mothers, should add housewifery, in all its branches, to the present curriculum.

With brains like wrung sponges and well assured that there is nothing worth knowing beyond the attainments of the sixth form, high school girls rarely leave the groove in which they find themselves. It will not be denied that home-reared girls read much more widely than do high school girls. "They browse unconfin'd," to quote Mrs. Gaskell, "on the wholesome pasturage of English literature," while high school girls are staid-fed on condensed primers.

But it is not about educational advantages or drawbacks of high schools he would chiefly speak, but about the dangers to health which lie in the system. He has read a paper by a distinguished authority on educational subjects, Dr. Emily Bryant, in which she argues that it is impossible to overwork girls, their inherent indolence and frivolity being proofs against any stimulus that can be applied to them. He would answer Dr. Bryant that it is possible to overwork horses—witness splints, curb, thoroughpin and back snaw, and surely girls are not more obdurate than horses.

MENTAL ABERRATIONS. It is no uncommon event to hear overworked school girls complain of their distracted mental condition. The aberrations may be slight and go no further; but now and again they advance into that wild coma which corresponds with apathetic dementia. We also have cyclones of mania, or anti-cyclones of melancholia, hurricanes of morbid impulses or the settled bad weather of moral perversion. Among the commonest nervous disturbances he would mention sleep, or sleep, so deep and difficult to break as to be almost catatonic in its nature, neuralgia, chorea and hysteria. Besides nervous disturbances, there are other ailments and diseases fostered

by over pressure, chief of which are anaemia and general delicacy. These conditions are likely to produce bad complexions, shortness of sight and loss of hair and teeth. They are fatal to womanly beauty. A single glance at some high schools and the complexions of the girls in them convince Sir James that they are deluged in red corpuscles however rich they may be in blue stockings.

The anaemia encountered in high school girls is sometimes due to the direct action of mental tension on the blood-forming apparatus, but it is sometimes due also to the action of that tension on the digestive functions. Large numbers of high school girls suffer from loss of appetite. They labor under a gastric disorder now so common that it might receive a distinctive appellation and be called anorexia scholastica, in which the lessened flow of energy from the exhausted nerve centres retards the functions of all the abdominal viscera.

The ailments of girlhood which have been ascribed to overpressure do not always end with the cause that induced them, but are apt to plant themselves permanently in the system they have infested, or to blossom into something worse. The head-achy girl is not unlikely to grow into a migrainous and invalid woman, unlikely to attract the admiration of a rational person of the opposite sex and unfit for the duties of a wife and mother. A voluminous mental state may develop into epilepsy, somnambulism may lead to hysteria, insomnia may lay the foundation of insanity and anaemia at the growth period may entail life-long debility.

WOMEN AND CONSUMPTION. Consumption is more fatal to males than to females under five years of age; but then a change takes place, and from five to ten it is much more fatal to females, while from ten to fifteen it is more than twice as fatal to females than to males. From fifteen to twenty the disease is still much more common among females than males. The distribution of mortality is very important when viewed in connection with the fact that the reduction in the disease which is happily going on has been proportionately less of late years amongst females. The fact that there is a special proclivity to phthisis in girls from five to twenty years of age suggests very pointedly that one of the evils of overpressure in them will be the propagation of phthisis. The nervous exaltation which is characteristic of the growth period in girlhood obviously much increases the liability of the sex to phthisical disease, and as overpressure aggravates that nervous exaltation it must still further increase that liability. The connection between states of pulmonary tuberculosis has not yet been clearly defined, but this much may be

taken as established that nervous depression and exhaustion alike open wide the door for the invasion of the tubercle bacillus.

The indoor life of the girls, their sedentary habits and the stooping posture in which they pass much of their time brings their lungs into a state that is favorable to tuberculous infection.

If it were our object to secure an abundant harvest of phthisis, we could not better set about it than by providing for general overpressure in schools for girls. Keep a large number of town-bred girls in a constant state of nervous tension, so as to abbreviate sleep and impair appetite, deprive them as much as possible of fresh air; insist on their writing and poring over books for prolonged periods, and scatter among them a few cases of tubercular disease, and you will inevitably, in the fulness of time, have a rich growth of phthisis.

SUICIDE AMONG SCHOOLGIRLS.

The special proclivity of girls to disease at the period of growth may be traced in other ways. Suicides which spring from causes identical with those that are productive of insanity, are four times more numerous among men than among women, and the male death rate from suicides is much greater than the female at all ages, except, strange to say, from fifteen to twenty, when the female death rate rises considerably above the male. The rate of increase of suicides, moreover, during the past twenty years, has been much higher among women than among men.

Chorea, which is at all times more fatal to females than to males, reaches a rate of mortality amongst females from ten to twenty years of age, that is startling, when contrasted with the rates at other ages, and in connection with the mortality from this disease. It is of extreme interest to note that, while the male mortality due to it has declined during the last thirty years, the female mortality has risen rapidly during the last ten years. Chorea, he it is remembered, is a malady, which, perhaps more than any other, may be attributed directly to overpressure and nervous strain.

TROUBLES AHEAD FOR WOMEN.

Women owe their comparative immunity from organic nervous diseases to their anabolic habit and to the comparative tranquillity and sheltered lives which they have led. But, if all this is to be altered, if women are to be made as katabolic as possible and are to take part in the struggle for life on equal terms with men, then it follows that they will have to sacrifice to a great extent the immunity from organic nervous disease, which they have enjoyed.

Over-pressure from ten to seventeen years of age may have amongst the remote consequences not only the reproduction of the functional nervous disorders which so often manifest themselves at that period, but a crop of gross nervous degeneration which have up to this time been rarely seen in women.

Sir James says the University of St. Andrew, in Scotland, which has opened all its classes in arts, science and theology to women as well as men, has taken a downhill step toward confusion and disaster. "What was decided amongst the prehistoric protozoa cannot be obliterated by Act of Parliament," and the essential differences between male and female cannot be obliterated at a stroke of the pen by any Senator Academics.

It is in the sympathetic accord of the

differentiated sexes that human progress can alone be hoped for:

"He is a half part of a blessed man, Left to be divided by such a life, And she a fair divided excellence Whose fulness of perfection lies in him."

And blindness to this complementary relation of the sexes, so patent to Shakespeare, is what lends wise men—wise but ignorant or contemptuous of biology—to sanction intersexual competition in education and for subsistence with its ruinous effects.

"These tall, graceful girls," says Sir James in a final outburst, "whom we see around us so plentifully to-day—and never in the world's history has woman's beauty been so beautiful as in England to-day—these tall, graceful, lovely girls are the offspring of mothers who had not the advantages of a high school education."

PANTALON-LIKE GIRLS.

"What will the next generation of English women be like? I saw a vision once that has haunted me ever since. It was of a score of sweet girl graduates from a celebrated college, standing together in a group on the platform of a provincial railroad station waiting for trains to carry them home at the end of the term. Sweet they were, I doubt; most of them carried musical instruments, but they were not, upon the whole—well, not just 'the fairest of the fair' to look upon.

"I am afraid I shall be called ribald and profane, but I should describe them as pantalon-like girls, for many of them had a stooping gait and withered appearance, shrunk shanks and spectacles on nose. Let us conserve the beauty of our English girls very jealously. I would rather that they remained ignorant of logarithms than lost one jot of it."

A CONSTANT QUAKE.

There is a Section of Street That Experiences Actual Perpetual Motion.

A section of Twenty-sixth street, New York, daily enjoys sensations similar to those caused by a constant succession of earthquake shocks. Everything in the vicinity trembles as if suffering from a mild attack of the ague. It is really perpetual motion.

There is a clubhouse in this section, right in the centre of the trembling district. A recent visitor, one who had not been there before, noticed that objects on the mantel or elsewhere always moved slightly, and that he himself felt a strange vibration. The friend with whom he was dining laughed at his uneasiness. "It's always that way here," he said. "It's only a little shake, perhaps the hundredth part of an inch, but it's perpetual. Some day I fear the building will shake to pieces all at once, just like the 'wonderful one-horse shay.' The cause? Oh, it's that electric light plant opposite. Engines and dynamos running all the time. Enough steam power is exerted to blow the block to Jericho; enough electricity generated to light a square mile brilliantly every night. All the houses around here shake."

"I remember when this block was a most exclusive residential neighborhood. Now at least half of it—the half that shakes most—is given over to small shops and cheap theatrical boarding houses. There's one pleasant aspect, however, to this vibration. When the clubman performed a pleasing experiment. He requested the waiter to bring him a glass of milk, some rum, ice and sugar. These he blended, after which he placed the glass upon the window sill. 'In three minutes,' said the clubman, 'it will be a perfect milk shake.' It was no exaggeration. The vibration, though annoying, at least supplied one want."